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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 TRSE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 H-01 DODE-00 SSO-00 PRS-01
SY-05 /055 W

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R 051545Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8417

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 0088

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, PINT, AR
SUBJECT: 30 SUSPECTED TERRORISTS KILLED AT YEAR'S END

REF: BUENOS AIRES 7655

1. THIRTY ALLEGED SUBVERSIVES WERE KILLED BY SECURITY FORCES IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS ON DECEMBER 31, BRINGING THE TOTAL OF REPORTED POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED DEATHS TO AROUND 1,500 FOR 1976. THE HEAVIEST NUMBER OF FATALITIES OCCURRED IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS WHEN AT LEAST 250 SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVES WERE KILLED.

2. ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF LAST FRIDAY'S INCIDENTS, WHICH COME FROM OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE, EIGHT PERSONS IN TWO CARS WERE KILLED ESCAPING A ROADBLOCK NEAR NUNRO, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE, AT 2 A.M.; SEVEN PERSONS WERE KILLED AFTER FIRING ON POLICE DURING A HOUSE-TO-HOUSE IDENTIFICATION CHECK AT 2 A. IN BOULOGNE, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE, (TWO NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS WERE REPORTEDLY WOUNDED IN THE INCIDENT); AND FIVE PERSONS IN TWO CARS WERE KILLED TRYING TO EVADE A ROADBLOCK IN MADERO, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE. IN BAHIA BLANCA, THE MILITARY REPORTED THAT THREE PERSONS WERE KILLED IN A ROADBLOCK SHOOTOUT AND TWO ESCAPED, INCLUDING ONE WHO WAS IDENTIFIED AS CARLOS ALBERTO OLIVA. SEVEN MORE PERSONS WERE KILLED IN ROSARIO. AT A SPECTACULAR RAID IN ROSARIO AT 6:30 AMN POLICE REPORTED THAT

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DURING AN EXCHANGE OF GUNFIRE AND TEAR GAS BOMBS, THREE FEMALES WERE PUSHED OUT OF AN EIGHTH-STORY WINDOW PRESUMABLY BY THEIR SUBVERSIVE COLLEAGUES). WHEN THE SHOOTING LATER SUBSIDED, SECURITY FORCES FOUND TWO MEN IN THE ROOM, KILLED BY GUNFIRE. ALL OF THOSE KILLED WERE IDENTIFIED AS MONTONEROS. (LA OPINION (JANUARY 2) POINTED OUT THAT FOR THE LAST WEEK OFFICIAL RELEASES HAVE BEEN USING THE WORD MONTONERO, A WORD THAT HAD BEEN BANNED FOR PRESS USE IN MARCH AND REPLACED BY THE PHRASE "GROUP OUTLAWED IN 1975." THE PAPER NOTED THAT THE DECISION TO USE THE WORD MONTONERO IMPLIED THAT THE SECURITY FORCES NOW BELIEVE THE GROUP IS SUFFICIENTLY WEAKENED SO AS TO NO LONGER CONSTITUTE A GRAVE THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY.)

3. LA OPINION (JANUARY 2) WAS THE ONLY PAPER TO COMMENT ON THE DECEMBER 31 RASH OF TERRORIST KILLINGS, NOTING THAT "IN THE GREAT MAJORITY OF CASES, THE EXTREMISTS WERE SURPRISED IN PASSIVE ACTIONS, HIDDEN IN THEIR HIDEOUTS OR CIRCULATING IN CARS WHEN THE CONFRONTATIONS TOOK THEM UNAWARE". THIS SITUATION THE PAPER ATTRIBUTED TO THE "ADVANCED STATE OF DISINTEGRATION AND VIRTUAL RETREAT OF THE SUBVERSIVE GROUPS." (IN A DECEMBER 31 ARTICLE ON THE DECLINE OF SUBVERSIVE CAPABILITY, LA OPINION REPORTED THAT SUBVERSIVE GROUPS HAD LOST AT LEAST 1,500 COMBATANTS THROUGH DESERTION, BESIDES HEAVY FATALITIES AT THE HANDS OF SECURITY FORCES.)

4. THE ABOVE INCIDENTS WERE ALL REPORTED EXCLUSIVELY FROM OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE, AS IS CUSTOMARY. WHILE WE HAVE NO REPEAT NO INFORMATION CONCERNING THESE INCIDENTS OTHER THAN THAT ATTRIBUTED TO GOVERNMENT SOURCES, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE RECENT REPORTS OF SUCH INCIDENTS PERSISTENTLY INVOLVE A PATTERN OF SHOOTOUTS WITH CARLOADS OF TERRORISTS WHO TRY TO ESCAPE ROADBLOCKS AND FATAL CONFRONTATIONS AT 2 AND 3 A.. DURING "ROUTINE" HOUSE-TO-HOUSE INVESTIGATIONS, IN WHICH THERE ARE NEVER ANY REPORTS OF CIVILIAN WITNESSES AND RARELY INJURIES TO THE SECURITY FORCES INVOLVED. THERE IS ON RECORD [REDACTED] REPORT [REDACTED] QUOTING A SECURITY OFFICIAL TO THE EFFECT THAT SOME [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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OF THE OFFICIALLY REPORTED CONFRONTATIONS IN LA PLATA WERE "FABRICATIONS" USED BY THE SECURITY FORCES TO EXPLAIN AWAY THE KILLING OF PRISONERS IN DETENTION. NEVERTHELESS, SECURITY OPERATIONS HAVE BECOME CONSIDERABLY LESS BLATANT THAN THE PILAR MASSACRE IN AUGUST AND HAVE ALSO TAKEN ON A MORE ROUTINE QUALITY IN

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